

THE

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Protestant Conformist:

OR, A

PLEA

FOR

MODERATION,

Contained in a

LETTER

FROM

One Conforming MINISTER to another:
and His ANSWER to it.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the *Bible and Three Crowns* in *Cheapside* near *Mercers-Chappel*. M. DC. LXXIX.

[7]

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF A

FREE

FOR

STATION

contained in a

LETTER

FROM

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TO ANOTHER
THE ANSWER TO IT

LONDON:

Printed by the Publisher, at the Bible and Tract Society in Cheap-
street near St. Dunstons Church. M.D.C.LXXIX.

Dear and Reverend Sir,

IF you knew how severely I charge my self with my remifness in answering your last, you would more readily pardon me; and when I consider your candor and moderation, I cannot (upon my involuntary transgressions) despair of your Clemency: for amongst all those worthy Qualities that adorn you, and whereby you adorn the Gospel, and our Function, That vertue or rather grace of Moderation has graven the most deep and indelible characters of endearedness upon me; and though your worth has placed you above contempt, and not left so bright a Taper under a Bushel, yet I could even wish for the sakes of others, that you were posted in a more conspicuous Eminency, that (in this sense also) *your Moderation might be known unto all men.*

And now that I have so grateful a Theme, I cannot so easily take leave of it, but that I must beg your pardon if (waving till the next opportunity some other things I should have mentioned to you) I go on to bemoan the too evident and epidemick want of this Christian vertue amongst those of us that justly pretend to the best form of Christianity, as most suitable to the revealed will of God, and the Pattern of the most pure and Primitive times: For as to our adversaries objecting of Novelty upon us, it has been so fully and clearly redargued, that I need not meddle with it. That I would be at, is, To convince my Brethren, the Sons of my Mother, of the absolute necessity and seasonableness of this Grace of Moderation, as the *Causa sine qua non* of the supporting and continuance of our Reformed Religion. I tell you no news, because you have sometimes observed it to me, That our *Roman* Adversaries (who like their Pagan Predecessors will *per fas aut nefas* be masters of the World) can manage any Game, Play on any Instrument, work with all Tools, transcend *Proteum* in change of shapes, have while we slept (with the assistance of their Master) sown Tares in our Field, which now they so carefully water and cherish that they expect a plentiful Harvest, I mean those Dissentions and Animosities amongst Protestants, and to that degree of bitterness, clamour, and reviling each other, that they hope it shall not end there, but that (their other great Engines having lately miscarried) they may sit still a while and see us with delight carrying on their work for them! how well do they know that a Kingdom or Church divided against it self cannot stand? And though they need not to be Disciples to the *Florentine* (for *Ignatius* his Conclave has far out-done him yet that short *Recipe*, of *Divide & Impera*, they find such a never-failing Medicine, as they have thereby Horse-leach'd a great deal of the best blood in *Europe*. What Quacks are these in most Princes Courts? Who knows not what their Residence at *Vienna*, and their hanging there (more close than Pendants) at that soft Head of that Spread (or rather shatter'd) Eagle, has done? how have they drawn him to make Enemies of good Subjects in *Hungary*, because Protestants? and by his inexorable cruelty to them for Religions sake, to pull down with his own hands the Ramparts of *Christendom*, by forcing those who heretofore were the *Remora* in the *Crescents* Progress Westward, to take Protection under the growing but more prudent *Turk*? How these Earwigs swarm'd about *Madrid* and the *Escorial* whilst there was any likelihood of the *Austrian* Families doing their work, and how upon the decline of that they have crawl'd about the *Flower de Lis*, (for these Summer-Insects do adore Eastward, and have no Deity but the rising-Sun); how they (the most sedulous servants in *Vulcan's* shop) have plied their Bellows at the *Louvre*, till their inflations have so swoln that already great-enough mind, that the best part of *Europe* will hardly hold it, and most Nations of it have smarted for presuming by just defence to interrupt his growing Glory? and how they have horn-bound for several years past the *Bavarian* Duke, though never without a considerable Army, from assisting his Neighbour Princes against the *Galick* Invasions, they are strangers to the Affairs of *Europe* that know not.

And the *Paris* Cabal can tell us, that that fine Texture of setting the Northern Princes of the Reformed Religion by the ears, was first spun in *Loyola's Parlour*, though wrought up by *Parisian* Statists. I might trace the *Vestigia* of these Hellish blood-bounds through many Countries, till I should lose my self and weary you; but refer you to Mr. *Wadsworth's* Memoirs (which you have seen e're this) for some of their Projects in *Germany*, wherein they esteemed it a Master-piece so to order the matter, as to set a *Calvinist* Prince against a *Lutheran*, and so *é contra*.

But now, Sir, having been long enough a Transmarine Observer, (and considering the case last mentioned makes me a good Errant home) I conclude it more than high time to return, for I find they are arrived before me: And how willingly would I lend my Optick Glasses to thousands of Protestants (otherwise I hope loyal and well qualified) whose will or uncharitable humour to hanging in their light, hinders them from seeing how busie at work these Scorpions are amongst us: we need not to be sent back to 88, or the fifth of *Novemb. Anno 1605*. These Histories are believed by all good Protestants, though *Apocryphal* to them who would act the same over again; and indeed if we will take their own words *ex post facto*, they were never guilty of Treasons, bloody

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Conspiracies and Tragedies, no not they. Oh what omnipotent Priests have they ! that can, as they make a god of Bread, make Treason and Guilt after a shrift to lose their nature ! and the most enormous Traitors like Children unborn, innocent of all sins but original, and that but some of them !

The worst on't is, that not only they have the Braß to impose on the World, but that some of ourselves have the facility (I dare not call it charity) to take these counterfeits for good coyn, and forsooth out of animosity to other Protestants to believe the *Papists* innocent. I desire the best Scholar of the lame *Spanish* Soldier to help forward the Popish Design more effectually than we should do, were we but all of this mind ; for my part, far be it from me to palliate or extenuate Treasons or Rebellions under the Cloak of Religion and Reformation, for these instead of setting a better gloss fix a deeper stain, or more inextinguishable guilt and horrid brand upon the Action and Actors ; yet when all is done you are satisfied as well as I that in the beginnings of our late wretched Wars one might say of many of the other Party as of those that went with *Abalom*, they went in the simplicity of their hearts, and they knew not any thing ; to my knowledge many of them did as much as possible condole the horrid consequences of that War, and did believe as you and I also did, that the Finger of *Joab* had an unseen motion in those affairs, though personally and visibly acted by men whose after climbing to the seat of Government shew'd what was before in their hearts ; as he sees little in the world that knows not that the self-same Design may not be endeavoured and driven on by men of contrary Principles, and for contrary ends. I had not insisted on this so well known already to you, but that I hear with some grief our young Levites (who neither saw nor suffered what we did) Hectoring at that rate against some innocent Protestants, and which my Ink it seems should blush to recite, declaring that they would rather close with the *Papists*, than admit of compromise with Dissenting Protestants.

It is an ordinary Observation, That a quarrel amongst nearest Relations is often most grievous ; but when one of such for meer revenge will unite himself to the mortal enemy of both, who will not affirm him void of not only grace but good nature ! Oh degenerate Age !

Where is that Evangelical peace and love, our Saviours blessed Legacy ! where's that fervent charity ! is it turned into burning hatred ? Where's that Moderation we should shew unto all men ! is it degenerated into the most inexorable rancor ? That sheep should stray and sometimes encounter one another in the absence of the wolf is not strange ; but when the wolves come, they at least unite, and not having power to resist, flie together. That these wolves of *Romulus* abound amongst us, all know that are not already guld by them. But to elude the care of our vigilant Shepherds, these Monsters worse than that which *Hercules* wrestled with, have dwindled the Wolf into a Fox, and to avoid suspicion have cunningly cover'd that too with Lambs wool, that it requires much circumspection to discover them.

He that hath read the Legend of their Clownish St. *Francis*, and the story of the *Illuminati*, will easily believe who are the Fathers of our Quaking Sect, though themselves possibly know not ; and it is too evident that they have screwed themselves, and transfused their Influences into all the several Perswasions amongst us, none excepted. And as they take the cawls of our sheep in the fields for compounding their Fire-balls to burn our Cities, so in compensation they instill wilder fire under the notion of zeal, (an excellent grace of it self, but misguided, of most dismal effects) into the sheep of the great Shepherd, to the renewing of the complaint, *Homo homini Lupus*. And without controversie, if they find their expected success, these *Flambeaus* will much more prompt their work, than those they bestowed so freely towards the destroying of our Mother-city in 66.

And that we may better conjecture what they are doing elsewhere, I shall give you a skantling of what we observed in my own Parish, though too late taken notice of, else probably the world might have known the persons as well as the design : Two Gentlemen pretty well accoutred took up a Lodging together, they seem'd no contemptible persons, nor wanted moneys, they both wore Perukes, and (which made some the more suspicious of them) had considerable variety, and differing much in colour, yet seldom made use of their Flaxen ones in Town, but as one of the Maids of the house observed, he that rode abroad ofteneft took one of that sort in his Coat-pocket ; the Neighbourhood begun to imagine them Highway-men, but one of them seldom riding abroad during their six Months stay here, and their orderly *Decorum* and converse, begot a better opinion of them ; one was observed to go frequently to the meetings of Dissenters, and there behave himself as seriously as any of them ; the other when he was not out of Town (for he commonly ordered his Journeys on Friday or Saturday, and returned on Monday) would mostly come to the Parish-Church, and to any ones sight demean himself very devoutly : He would ordinarily as he could find opportunity be in the company of good Conformists, and if none else hapned to speak of Church-affairs he would break the Ice, and mostly begin with magnifying the Church of *England* as the best constituted in the world ; and after a large Harangue (for he could speak with a Grace) would bemoan the Divisions in it, and conclude with the necessity of extirpating all Dissenters root and branch ; for else, says he, those *Samaritans* will never rest till they have razed it to the very ground. This was his ordinary Theme, though with some variation of words, till one time a good Neighbour of mine replied upon him : Sir, 'Tis a true saying, it's easier to give than take Counsel ; how do you practise what you advise to, while it appears your

Comerade,

Comerade your bosom-friend is one that frequents Conventicles, and is daily in the company of such, cannot you either win him or discard him? Oh, Sir, says he, I must tell you he is my intimate friend of a long standing, and I can digest his conversation in all things but that, which for good reasons I do a little indulge, for by him I have in this, as well as other places where we have resided (my Neighbour thought this slip undesignedly from him) the advantage of knowing their secret discourses and machinations against the Church, and thereby the means of justly inciting the zeal of such good men as you against this generation of Vipers. This stirred up the choler of an honest Mechanick that had quietly listened all this while, that he broke silence thus: For my part I neither like you nor your friend; and it's well if you be not brethren in evil, or like *Sampson's* Foxes that you turn tails to do mischief; 'tis well known in the Town that I go constantly to Church, and yet (I hope here's no Informers here) I often hear an honest Minister preach elsewhere, and I hope my care of being instructed for another world will neither offend the Justices, nor the Parson. If I had heard any preach sedition, I would have quickly (as it is my duty) have acquainted the Magistrates with it. But I tell you, (and then he spoke with more impatience) I never heard a man in my life talk so disloyally as your companion, so that I have carefully avoided his company of late; and he has so bedawbed the Church of *England*, and rendered the fears of Tyrannical usage from them so formidable, and that they would use us worse than *Papists*, that I believe his design was to turn us *Papists*; and however most of the people that have any degree of Prudence and sobriety could with him with his fellows in *Newgate*; yet there's one or two that I fear he has perverted, and it may be we shall hear more of him, or you elsewhere; for I heard this very day of one of your haunts not far from this place.

This smart Reply of an inconsiderable man, was rebuked by some as too malepert to a stranger of seeming quality; but approved by others, as likely to have in it as much of Truth as he wanted of Patience. The Gentleman concerned, though he could not keep his colour from changing, yet keeping his countenance as well as he could; said, Gentlemen, I have sojourned now about six Months amongst you, and I hope none has found incivility from me, neither have I till now encountered any rudeness from any person, to the honour of your Town I speak; and now that this mean person whose employment is about the feet, should thus flee in my face, and to express his causeless pique against me, turn all his Tools into Awls to gore that Reputation my fair deportment has obtained amongst you, 'tis somewhat grievous; but when you have known me as long as him, you will know how little I have deserved to be thus accosted.

Hereupon the Company broke up, some of whom came and related the whole to me; my advice was that they should acquaint the Magistrates, and take a Constable with some assistance to search their Chamber, which (the day being far spent) they resolved to do next morning. But before many people in the Town were up, these hopeful Chickens had taken the wing; and notwithstanding all our care by Messengers and Letters, where we imagined they had haunted, we could meet with no further satisfaction than that our Town was well quit of them; and that by their designed evil, this good is arrived to us, that my Parishioners of all sorts live in more love and charity than heretofore: those of both parties that have been most enflamed by these *Boutefeu's* to the greatest height of animosity, being most ashamed that they should have been over-acted by those *Roman Engines*. Some of the Servants of that Inn where they Lodged, have since (which they considered not in time) told several stories of having seen Beads and other Trinkets too tedious now to recite. The story and design are plain enough, they need no Comment.

Some that are backward to believe any thing against such men, will be ready to say, *Quorsum hoc perditio*, would they take such care and pains to play at such small games? With the leave of such incredulous, this is no small game; for as I hinted before, this is their chief though after-game, and as like to do their Jobb for them as any enterprize they ever undertook.

For my own particular I shall, by Gods assistance, keep my station, and I hope rather grow than decline in that grace of Moderation I so much prize and praise in you; and if some of our Tribe will go on to Lord it over Gods Heritage, instead of being Ensamples to their Flock, or learning of Christ to be meek and lowly in spirit: If others will be smirking their fellow servants, &c. I shall make it my Prayers and constant endeavour that when my Lord and Master comes he may not find me so doing.

Dear Sir, I was not so confident of any worth in what I could observe or relate, but that I was about to caution you to avoid exposing it; but sith that might frustrate the end for which I have given you this trouble, I leave it to your own Prudence to communicate as you think fit. I am,

SIR,

Your unworthy Fellow-servant,

B

N. T.

Septemb. 13.

1679.

An Answer to the former LETTER.

Reverend Sir,

Although your affections do blind your judgment, to think better of me than I deserve, yet I hope you will always find me a true lover and practicer of that moderation, which (is so much my duty, and which) you so much adore. I am very well contented with the Station in which God hath set me; High places will not suit with such weak heads as mine: I am not sorry I am out of that temptation, lest a Vertigo should take me, and make me fall down the precipice which lyes before me. I cordially approve of the honest design of your ingenious Letter, and have taken the liberty (which you did not deny me) to publish it, with my own approbation of it.

He must wilfully shut his eyes, that will not see how busie the Jesuits and Romish Emis-saries are, both at home and abroad, to promote their grand design; and how all things are lawful with them, that are useful to promote their Catholick Cause: Their late desperate hellish Plot against the person of a Prince so full of clemency towards them, and against our Civil and Religious Liberties, as English men and Protestants; their devillish designs to destroy our persons, and to enslave our consciences and posterities, may justly raise our just indignation against them; and put us upon study and endeavours, to beget a right understanding among all true Protestants, and not to narrow, or weaken the interest of our Church, by our hot childish contentions and divisions; but to unite and strengthen it what we can, against the common enemy that is undermining of it. Alas! our young raw heads grow giddy, and, I fear, gaze so much at the golden Cup, that they will be easily tempted to drink of the poisonous abominations contained in it. Nothing is more obvious to common observation, than the Jesuits transforming themselves into all shapes, and mingling themselves with all parties, to hear and heighten mens spirits, and to soment and widen differences between true Protestants: And as no party can excuse or clear themselves from having been abused by them, so all had need to be watchful lest they give advantage and encouragement to them. It's pleasant to read the story acted in your Parish, and the wise improvement and advantage that both you and your parishoners make of it. I heartily pray, that both you and I may obtain mercy from God, to be faithful and diligent in our work, That whilst others are found eating and drinking with the drunken, and *smiting their fellow servants*; we may be like *that faithful and wise Steward, whom his Lord will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.*

We have two of the most precious, excellent things in the world committed to our trust, viz. The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and the precious souls of men, and if we did more seriously mind the discharge of our trust, we should find little heart or leisure to quarrel with others about trifles. I cannot but bewail the unlesoanble heats of our younger fry, whose bitter zeal runs out against perions and things which they do not understand. How nauseous is it to sober ears, to hear a Hectoring youngster let fly at *Jack Calvin*, whom our Reverend Prelates and Doctors of the Church (who were better Champions for the Church of *England*, than these Novices are like to make) did never mention without reverence and respect; as is evident to any versed in the Writings of *A. Bp. Whitgift*, *Bp. Andrews*, *Bp. Bilson*, *Dr. Willet*, &c? Though perhaps it's but a man of Straw of their own making, that these valiant Champions are crowing over: And to hear these inveigh against our first and most zealous Reformers, for some different apprehensions, or expressions, about some abstruser and darker points, which (themselves have never studied nor understood) and the Articles of the Church of *England* seem so much to favour, is loathsome to sober minds; and begets an opinion in those that have any prejudice against, or are dissenters from the Church of *England*, that we are returning again to *Rome*, and enemies to the Reformation they first promoted. Again. the putting all dissenters in the same rank, and bespattering them with the names of Schismaticks, Factious, and Seditious (though many of them do not break communion with us) to me seems very harsh and unreasonable, if not unjust. It's well known to the world, there be many learned, sober, godly men amongst them (some whereof, you and I have the happiness of a profitable acquaintance, and sweet conversation with) who though they be not satisfied to do some things the Law requires, (and which our Church might well spare, if our Rulers saw meet to dispense with them) that otherwise are as true to, and some of them as zealous, able Champions for the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, as any of our selves. This foolish dividing humour, helps to widen, and keep open the difference between true Protestants; and mens distances from, and unacquaintedness with each other, makes them to look upon one another as Hobgoblins, and frightful apparitions; whereas a more familiar acquaintance and con-
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verse together, would let men see that they are not such Bugbears and monsters, as some fiery Zealots on both sides represent them to be. When I came first to this place, my Predecessor (who was a *Don Furioso* against Dissenters, and looked upon himself thereby as better qualified for the Preferment which he obtained) told me I must beware of such persons in my Parish that were dangerous, factious, and turbulent fellows; and of such a Minister (who preached amongst them) as a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition. But upon a little trial and observation, I found they were the most serious diligent Auditors I had; and upon a further enquiry after them, and acquaintance with them, I perceived they were such as lived most conscientiously in the practice of the great unquestionable duties of Christianity in all my Parish. I saw none so charitably disposed upon any good occasion; none more just in their dealings, none more ready or willing to give me my just dues; none more peaceable among their neighbours, striving to prevent or compose differences; none more careful to sanctify the Sabbath, to instruct their Children and Servants; and to pray in their Families, making conscience both of first and second Table Duties; and in one word, ready to every good work. I wish I could say so of all those that glory to be styled *true Sons of the Church of England*; and which he commended to me as such, whose zeal runs out mainly, if not only for Rites and Ceremonies, and will cry devoutly on the Lords day with us in the publick Liturgy, *Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners*; and yet live all the week without any open or solemn acknowledgment of God in their Families. And as for the Minister he gave such a character of, I found him an holy, learned, modest, self-denying man, who seems to have no design but to get to Heaven himself, and to get as many thither with him as possibly he can. He is frequently my Auditor, and I have much pleasing conversation with him. It's the grief of my soul that we cannot take such men into our Pulpits (without offence), who if they might but have that liberty, would never run into corners, as we now drive them. And this Gentleman (to shun all occasions of offence) never Preaches in the time of our publick Service, but the people come constantly to hear me, and when we have done, he Preaches to them, and many others go to hear him, which I am not offended at, but rather bless God for such an helper in my work.

And truly we may talk what we will of the Church of England, but if we do not take care to build up the Church of God, and encourage men to serious diligence about the business of Salvation, we may please our selves with such a notion, but neither God nor man will be pleased with us. It's no part of our prudence nor interest, (I am sure none of our duty, to widen the breaches, and weaken the interest of true Protestants, but rather, to study all amicable and peaceable ways, to bring things to a better composition and to strengthen one anothers hands against the common enemy. It was no pleasing sight to me, to see so many of our Function to shew so much zeal and heat (at our late Election of Knights for this Shire to serve in Parliament) for such a Gentleman — who though he may be an honest Gentleman, and might serve his Country faithfully for ought I know; yet both you and I know that he is untried, and a younger inexperienced man, and never manifested that zeal and courage for the Protestant Religion, and the Property of the Subject (which are the two things at this time chiefly to be looked after) as his Competitor hath done. And whether he be sufficiently ballasted, and fortified against the temptations he might meet with in such a station, is doubtful to all, especially to those that consider how the *Papists* generally fall in with him, and the charge he is at (whether at his own cost, or others, is not material) to procure it. I know both you and I are exposed to the censure of some of our Brethren for not voting with them; and reproached for being for a Fanatick or Presbyterian (though the Gentleman is known to hold communion with the Church of England, and as conformable as the Law requires.) And truly if sobriety and seriousness, and zeal for the Protestant Religion, and the Properties of *Englishmen*, must denominate men for Fanaticks, and Presbyterians, we shall give the party so styled, a great reputation and veneration in the minds of men, and draw contempt upon our own heads; and if we go on at this rate, we shall make *Ichabod* to sigh out five groans more for our Church; and instead of advancing the honour and reputation of the Church of England, we shall but bring further odium, and scorn and reproach upon her. I know there are many worthy men of the Church of England, whose sobriety, and seriousness, and learning, and zeal, and moderation, doth appear to all men, which are a grace and an honour to her; but her spurious off-spring are as little pleased with them as with Dissenters themselves. And because they will not rail at, and revile and reproach them that differ from them in lesser things (though the Apostle spends a whole Chapter to teach us forbearance in these things, *Rom. 14* and our Master hath set us a contrary example, which we are commanded to follow. *1 Pet. 2. 21, 23.* and we are called hereunto, *1 Pet. 3. 8, 9*) they reckon them no true friends to the Church of England. But I hope you and I have not so learned Christ, as to be shamed or frightened out of our duty, by such as know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. We are satisfied in our Consciences to conform to the Discipline and Ceremonies of the Church of England, and judge the things required not *tanti* to make us lose the liberty of our Ministry for not conforming to them. Though we dare not so severely censure others who profess they cannot in conscience submit to them. (And they have manifested the truth of their profession by exposing themselves and families to wants and necessities, to scorns and reproaches for not doing of it.) For men may talk what they please, but

I can never believe that learned, sober, godly, wise men, as (bating their differences) their greatest enemies must confess many of them to be, should meerly out of wilfulness, humour, peevishness and faction, keep off from these things, to expose themselves and families to so many troubles and inconveniences for nothing. For how censorious soever we are against them, I wish (for the honour of the Church of England) it be a groundless censure of some (no enemies to the Church of England I can assure you) that profess to fear, that if ever Popery should be established by a Law in England (which God forbid) there would not be that number of Nonconformists to it, as was found at St. Bartholomews, 1662. You and I may heartily wish that they saw things with our eyes. But whilst men have such different apprehensions of things, and the Apostles rules are so express in this case, *Rom. 14. 5.* and again, *vers. 22, 23.* we dare not but observe those excellent rules the Apostle gives us in that Chapter, which we could earnestly desire all our Brethren would study and practice; and to as many as walk according to these Rules, mercy and peace shall be upon them, as upon the Israel of God. It's sad to see how we gratifie the *Papists*, and serve their designs; and when one Plot hath miscarried, they are so successfully carrying on another, and laugh in their sleeves to see what fools they can make of us, to have their work done to their hands, and can sail faster and safer with a side-wind than they could with a full gale! Oh how they hug themselves to see Protestants set together by the ears, and like *Solomon's* foolish woman pulling down her house with her own hands. How many daily under the vizard of the Church of England, by specious Pamphlets, and cunning insinuations, would make Protestant dissenters seem worse than *Papists*: So that whosoever shall but offer to speak of any danger from the *Papists*, or move for a vigorous prosecution of the Plot, he is presently branded for a Fanatick and opposed by them that pretend to be of the Church of England, as the most dangerous of the two. If the Dissenters had been convicted of conspiring to take away the Kings life, to subvert the Government, to alter the Established Religion, had a score of them been Executed at Tyburn upon that account, what could have been spoken or written more severely against them? A stranger that knows nothing of the late Plot, taking his measures, and making his judgment by the Popular out-cry and clamour, which some that profess to be of the Church of England make, from the Presb and in discourse against them, cannot possibly believe otherwise than that *Coleman* was a Presbyterian, and *Whitebread*, *Ireland*, *Gavan*, *Harcourt*, and *Turner*, were all ejected Ministers at St. Bartholomews. And this course of theirs doth more amaze the observing world, because Mr. *Dugdale* hath openly sworn it at the Trial of *Whitebread*, &c. That it was the opinion of them at Paris, and St. Omers, to sing all this upon the Presbyterians, that is the death of the King. That if any thing of that nature should happen, they should be ready to give the first alarm, and give it out that it was those still King-killing Presbyterians that had done the fact. (Like *Nero* of old that let Rome on fire, thinking he could never have a better prospect of it than by its own light, and then to lay it upon the Christians; and as our Powder-plotters had their Proclamations ready (if their design had taken) to have laid it upon the Puritans.) And so they thought they should have brought the Episcopal party into their company to revenge themselves upon the Presbyterians. To which the Lord Chief Justice returned, It was pretty advice indeed, to have it first laid on the Presbyterians, that they might get the Episcopal to join and cut them off, and then their own Throats should be cut. For if they could get these old Fanaticks dispatched out of the way, which (if we may believe them that have turned from them to us, and been the Discoverers of the Plot) they hate and fear as much as any of us, they would quickly find out new and fresh Fanaticks; and some are ready to think the name of Protestant would soon be lost, that we must be all termed *Papists* or Fanaticks. Now I must confess to you when I compare these things with the words and practices of some that would be thought white-bobs of the Church of England, all the blood of my body flies into my face, (and it's either shame or anger, or a passion mixt of both, that sent it thither) to observe how ready they are to close with this Jesuitical Artifice, and to turn their spleen and indignation upon those whom notwithstanding the more minute differences amongst us, I dare not but own as brethren, and esteem as zealous Protestants as our selves. In a word, if the Dissenters be guilty of this Damnable diabolical Plot, let 'em die for it; if innocent, why are they reviled for it? And should we tempt them to think there is very little difference between guilt and innocency, that whoever is in the fault they must bear the blame? Sir, it concerns us now to speak, or for ever to be silent, and to warn our people, that they do not gratifie the *Papists* in this design. To conclude, Ministers in Scripture are stiled *Watchmen*, and we had need to warn our flocks of their danger; and they are stiled *Fishers*, and whilst others fish for Places, let us fish for Souls. We need not envy them their Pluralities, and Dignities, and Preferments, that slight and scorn the moderation we profess; if God will but enable us to be diligent, and faithful in our work, and make us instrumental to do good to Souls, it will be a greater honour and comfort to us, when we come to die, than all their worldly advantages will be to them. Dear Brother, Farewell. Let you and I take the Apostles Exhortation, *1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.* Feed the flock which is amongst us, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over Gods heritage, but being ensamples to the flock; and when the chief shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. And this is the highest ambition of,

SIR, Your unworthy Brother and Fellow-labourer.

Septemb. 22. 1679.

N. D.

